I/E. FRONT DOOR - WOODEN COTTAGE IN WOODS - MORNING

A pale JULIET, 66, hunched over with a cane in each hand stands by the open front door of the wooden cottage situated in the woods.

SAM, well toned for 68 wears, dresses in woodcutters gear, stands on the porch. He takes an axe off a nearby rack and kisses Juliet.

SAM
Ya rest now. Be back before ya know it.

Juliet faintly smiles through her pain.

JULIET
Invite John for dinner, Sam. I am sure he’s missing his home cooked meals.

SAM
Ya’re not up to it, Juliet.

JULIET
Nonsense.

SAM
OK pumpkin. If ya say so.

Juliet smiles. Sam walks off, axe over his shoulder.

EXT. CLEARING

JOHN, late 60’s, wears brace type overalls. He and Sam cross a small clearing and head for the denser part of the woods. Axes over their shoulders.

SAM
Last job for me! I’m hangin’ my axe after this lot!

JOHN
Why? Ya have heaps of good years left in ya.

SAM
Need to spend more time with Juliet. She’s getting weaker. The doc thinks a change of scenery might do ‘er good. A sea change. Ya know.

JOHN
Yeah, shoulda done that with ROSE.
SAM
Sorry mate, didn’t mean to stir ol’ memories.

JOHN
Nuh it’s OK! Is getting easier. ts’been two years now. Missa heaps though.

John stops in his tracks and looks around then ponders. They stand at the end of the clearing.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Ya know...

John looks and point to the stumps that remain in the clearing.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Rose and me carved our initials around ‘ere many years ago.

SAM
We did too.

Sam point to the denser part of the woods.

SAM (CONT’D)
t’sin ‘ere somewhere. Did it on our first date.

JOHN
Guess us country fellas are just foolish romantics.

They CHUCKLE and enter the woods.

EXT. DENSE WOOD

Five trees are marked with a yellow cross. They near the first marked tree.

SAM
Wonder what this damn disease is. I thought we had eradicated it two years ago in that clearing!

John drops his axe, pulls out a pair of gloves from his deep pockets, puts them on, takes the axe and swings at the tree.

JOHN
Might as well start with this one.

Sam wonders off. After a few swings John looks around.
JOHN (CONT'D)
hoy? What ya doin? easier if we
tackle this giant together ya
know.
(Beat)
Ya hear me?

SAM
It’s around ‘ere somewhere. These
babies have grown heaps in 50
years.

John laughs.

JOHN
Ya’ll never find it.

John swings his axe. Sam keeps looking. Moments later Sam
is seen clearing moss of a tree with his flick knife.

SAM
I found it!

John looks up and smiles.

JOHN
Great! Now get over ‘ere and
help!

Sam, elated, heads back and helps Sam chops the opposite
side of the tree.

SAM
I’ll have to show Juliet.

John glances over towards the tree.

JOHN
Doubt it. It’s marked.

CHARLIE, PETER, two woodsmen in their 40’s, dressed in
overalls, carrying axes and a long two man saw, approach.

Sam and John stop chopping and exchange handshakes.

CHARLIE
Hia fellas! how many diseased
ones today?

Sam takes a quick glance at his tree.

SAM
Four.

JOHN
Five!
(looks to Sam)
(MORE)
JOHN (CONT'D)

It needs to come down Sam.

PETER
Well which is it? Four or five?

JOHN
Five! But Sam's sacred love heart is on that tree.

CHARLIE
(jovially)
Shit hey. What a shame.

All look to each other holding back laughter.

Charlie and Peter head for that tree. Sam has a last look, shakes his head in dismay and continues chopping.

All falls quiet except the sounds of the axes and manual saw.

EXT. CLEARING - LATE AFTERNOON

Sam proudly holds a small slab, in his arms. A heart surrounds the initials S.P Loves J.D. John walks by his side.

SAM
Juliet will love this.
(To John)
Ya know, father use to say that trees were magical. Carve yar loved ones initial on it and they would be forever protected from harm.

JOHN
Sounds like an old wives tale mate.

SAM
Yeah. Oh, almost forgot! Juliet wants ya over for dinner tonight. Insisted she did. Said ya were in need of a home cooked meal.

JOHN
She’s a treasure. Certainly won’t pass up that offer. I’ll get cleaned up and be right over.

Sam and John head off in two different directions.
EXT. PORCH - WOODEN CABIN IN WOODS

John walks up to the cabin. Sam sits on the Porch’s steps the slab placed on his lap. He carves deeper into the letter “S” with a small flick knife.

JOHN
Hey? What ya doin’?

Sam continues.

JOHN (CONT’D)
Sam?

Sam looks up, eyes swollen with tears.

SAM
Juliet’s dead!

JOHN
What ya on about!?

SAM
Dad was right “a tree falls in the wood” and the magic dies.

Sam stops carving.

SAM (CONT’D)
She’s dead.

John speechless and shocked, places his hand on Sam’s arm. Sam is in tears. Johns eyes well.

SAM (CONT’D)
Can’t ya see. It’s the same thing that happened to Rose. She died because you sacred tree was chopped down and was ill ‘cause it was diseased.

Sam tosses the slab in frustration.

SAM (CONT’D)
The magic died with the tree, John.

Both look to the slab.